

group of now over 20 esteemed colleagues have now joined me in my efforts.

Americans should be granted more than the absolute minimum 60 days allowed by law. The special interest groups had several years to craft this new mandate—the people need more than 2 months to respond. The special interest groups exploit the disparity to tread on the will of the people. This bill seeks to rectify that disparity and to protect the best interests of the people.

All the elements for a comment extension are present. Nearly all American families are directly and substantially affected, the inclinations and desires of the people are thwarted, the cost increase of the mandate is high—more than doubling costs in some cases, and a last minute rush for “Midnight Regulation” is being pursued by the administration.

Apart from the higher cost and reduced freedom of choice, the Administration has not been fair to consumers and taxpayers during the development of the standards. DOE is supposed to disclose potential standards and impact analyses in a public process. Instead it bases its regulatory decisions on proposals submitted by special interest groups meeting in backrooms. Persons and groups who normally would speak to—and defend—the interests of consumers and taxpayers, and who have in years past been invited to participate, have been excluded.

Congress must assure that consumers are protected against faulty administration regulations. A public comment period of 120 days is required, given that the public has been largely excluded from the entire rulemaking process. This additional time will allow a thorough review and evaluation and a proper determination that has the consumers best interests in mind. I urge all Members to join me and fight to stop the erosion of the free marketplace and to prevent the elimination of consumer choice.

#### THE WORK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IS NOT DONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, this is the latest a Congress has met, absent a national emergency like World War II before an election. Now the work is not done. We do not yet have a fiscal year 2001 budget and the fiscal year began on October 1, which means that many essential government functions have yet to receive regular funding.

In an effort to achieve that, furious negotiations took place over the weekend. In fact, at 1:20 in the morning, night, agreement was reached between the Republicans in the House and the Senate, and the Democrats in the House and the Senate, and the White House.

There has been much talk on the other side of the aisle about the fact that the President was not in the room. They are right, the President was not in the room. They had 210 items in disagreement. This was grinding work for legislators and staff, but the President did something that the Republican

leadership did not do. The President empowered and sent his head of office of management and budget and gave him the authority to negotiate and said I will stand behind you. Go get the best deal you can get.

At 1:20 in the morning the people in the room decided they had the best deal they could get. Now, the next morning, the President stood behind his negotiator. The Republicans in the Senate stood behind their negotiator. The Democrats on the Senate stood behind their negotiator. The Democrats in the House stood behind their negotiator, but the whole agreement was blown up and Congress is still here because of one group, the Republican leadership.

When their negotiator came in who they had thought, he thought they had, empowered to negotiate for them, they said you did what? You did what? You reached an agreement on workplace health and safety? Do you not know that the people who are paying for our elections, paying for us to keep the House of Representatives and win the Presidency object to that. And the phone has been ringing off the hook. They already heard about it.

The National Association of Manufacturers called. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce called. By God we would not even want to have contingent, contingent workplace health and safety regulations, which is what the agreement was. Everybody says we do not know who the President is going to be, and what the Republicans negotiated was we will have new workplace health and safety regulations, but they will not go into effect until next June.

Apparently, the Republican leadership who is touting they are leading in the polls for the House and for the Presidency does not even trust their candidate for President not to sign these reasonable workplace health and safety regulations come next June, because they blew up the negotiations.

Since then they have pretended, by keeping us here, that we are negotiating. We are not negotiating. In fact, the Republican who last night, the leader who stood up to engage in the discourse with the Democrat side of the aisle, when he was asked where and when will the negotiators next meet, he said, we will get back to you on that. Well, guess what? They have not called. They have not called.

The Senate left town in disgust, Democrats and Republicans alike. We are still here, and they are pretending that they are being reasonable in negotiating, because they are trying through a stealth agenda to hide what they are going to do if they control everything next year, and that is something people need to think about is what if they control everything. Workplace health and safety increases out the window. Deal with global warming, very serious problem, no way. They do not believe in it.

How about the oil companies? The oil companies are gouging the heck out of

the American people. I have introduced legislation here to deal with that problem. No, cannot deal with the oil companies. They are big contributors too.

We heard earlier about a Medicare prescription drug benefit. Well, that was pretty inaccurate, because actually what the so-called bipartisan agreement which had about a dozen Democrats on it, Blue Dogs, that passed here was not on Medicare. It was to set up a new, very expensive, privatized system of pharmaceutical coverage for seniors that provided actually nothing. Because the head of the Health Insurance Industry of America said, well, you know, we are really not interested. None of my companies are interested in offering a pharmaceutical benefit only.

Then the Republicans came up with a new plan, we will bribe you to do that. We will give subsidies to you. We will give you the subsidies. You get the subsidies, you take them, no matter what, if you say you will offer a plan, with no conditions on the plans they will offer, no conditions on deductibles, no conditions on who they would redline out and not cover, no conditions on patients' appeals or rights.

They said that is not enough, some of those drugs are pretty expensive. They said well, we do not want to get in the face of the pharmaceutical industry, then they give subsidies to the pharmaceutical industry also. This is a farce.

#### REFUTING STATEMENTS REGARDING LACK OF PROGRESS OF THE 106TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am here in Washington, D.C. representing the constituents of the 16th district in Florida, and I have heard a lot of conversation tonight about the lack of progress of this Congress. I must refute those statements vehemently and personally.

I came to Congress in 1994 with a freshman class of the 104th Congress. What we inherited at that time was 40 years of Democratic leadership which brought us to record deficits, annual deficits, huge amount of monies owed, the U.S. Treasury or the taxpayers, \$5.7 trillion of accumulated debt, a government that was spending money out of Social Security, Medicare and every other trust fund that they could find, and borrowing money out of Social Security in order to camouflage the real size of the deficit annually.

When we were elected, we were told that we could expect, if we allowed the President and the majority party at that time to continue their spending ways, we would be probably this year spending in excess of \$200 billion or \$300 billion over and above what came in in revenues.

Interestingly, 6 years later, as I am about to celebrate my sixth anniversary of being elected to this important